

years, but that is not how we lead our lives now. We may have 7 to 10 jobs over the course of our lifetime, and health care reform has to reflect the way that people lead their lives.

People shouldn't feel trapped in a job because they are afraid to lose health care coverage for themselves or their child, and no life decision should hinge on whether you have health insurance.

Health care reform is about expanding coverage, creating competition and meaningful choice. And right here in Congress we are working to create a uniquely American system of health care that provides for affordable, high-quality care to all Americans.

You have seen firsthand why we need reform of the health care system, and you know that we have to lower costs and cover all Americans. The cost of this Congress doing nothing to reform the current health care system is catastrophic, and the status quo is unsustainable. I cannot stress enough the urgent need for health care reform.

□ 1015

Vietnam Continues to Egregiously Violate Human Rights

(Mr. CAO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAO. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam recently held that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam need not be put back onto the CPC because, based on his views, Vietnam has made sufficient improvement to its human rights policies to warrant exclusion. But recent developments show how wrong the Ambassador is.

Not to mention Vietnam's other numerous human rights violations, just days ago the Vietnam Government arrested Mr. Le Cong Dinh, a prominent lawyer in Vietnam, for openly defending human rights. Vietnam's arrest of Mr. Dinh contradicts its own alleged commitment to internationally accepted criteria on human rights.

Today I call upon the Members of this body to urge Vietnam to release Mr. Dinh immediately and unconditionally, as well as all prisoners in detention, for peacefully expressing their views. His immediate release will be a significant step in affirming Vietnam's intention to respect the rule of law.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, as our country embarks on a great national debate about health care, we are already seeing the fear-mongering beginning, that people are going to lose their health insurance.

Let us be very clear. As President Obama says, if you have health insurance and a doctor, if you like your

health insurance and your doctor, you will keep your health insurance and your doctor. And there is no group for which that is more true than our military personnel and our veterans.

Recently, at the Groton Navy base, I was at the PX being approached by individuals asking if President Obama was going to take away their TRICARE and their veterans benefits. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, we are going to be strengthening veterans benefits and TRICARE under the great leadership of the VA Secretary, Eric Shinseki.

So let the message be clear. Before all the fear-mongering, and before all the misleading information begins, if you are serving our country, if you are wearing the uniform of our Nation, your health care will be protected and strengthened under President Obama's health care reform effort.

REAL HEALTH CARE REFORM GIVES THE PATIENT THE POWER

(Mr. CASSIDY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, critical to health care reform is who has the power. Currently, the payer has the power. Ask a Medicaid recipient if she has the power or the government agency which pays. Ask a patient denied a procedure if he has the power or the insurance company which pays.

Reform must fix what's broken. What's broken is who has the power. Real reform gives the patient the power.

Government already controls 50 percent of health care spending. By controlling dollars, bureaucrats control care.

The President's plan doubles down on government control. It doubles down what is broken. It invests in government, not in patients. How can we trust bureaucracies that broke health care to fix health care? Trust government that always overpromised and underfunded?

Until reform transfers power from payer to patient, there is no reform. Give the power to the patient.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, every day my constituents share with me their personal stories. I often hear about their passport or mortgage troubles. But perhaps more than any other concern, they tell me of their family's struggle to stay healthy or to get treatment when they become sick without health insurance.

They tell me how they have worked all their lives, only to lose their retirement savings when they need serious medical treatment.

These stories are unacceptable, just as it is unacceptable that one in five

Americans are uninsured. Now is the time to act. For each day we delay, an additional 14,000 Americans lose coverage.

There are four items that must be included in the final legislation to fix our health care system. First, we must ensure coverage so that everyone has access to health insurance. Second, we must improve the quality of care. Third, we must contain costs while investing in preventative care. And finally, individuals must be guaranteed their choice of health insurance plans and doctors. If we can pass a bill that incorporates these four principles, we will have made a real and lasting impact on the lives of people.

A DRACONIAN CUT

(Mr. ROE of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the House floor, I offered an amendment to fully fund President Obama's budget request for the Federal prison system, and it was called a "draconian cut." I'm sure President Obama would be surprised to learn his recommended level would be greeted by such hostility by his own party, considering he proposed spending \$384 million more in fiscal year 2009, an increase of 6.8 percent.

Only in Washington, DC, is a 6.8 percent increase called a "draconian cut." Back in Johnson City, where I was mayor, we had a very simple philosophy. We spent less than we took in.

When I arrived in Washington, DC, I learned the President's philosophy was to borrow more than you take in and then spend all of that. Apparently, congressional Democratic philosophy is borrow even more than the President and then spend that.

I hope it's apparent that we are addicted to spending. I hope we adopt my amendment today and send a message, a small message, that this Congress is not entirely tone deaf to the fact that we have record deficits and runaway spending.

THE RECOVERY ACT IS WORKING

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, in just over 100 days, the Recovery Act is already at work providing immediate relief for hard-hit communities and families, creating and saving jobs, and jump-starting thousands of shovel-ready projects all across America.

Our economic problems were not created in 100 days and they will not be saved in 100 days. But thanks to the Recovery Act, we are meeting the greatest economic challenges in at least a generation.

There are early signs of progress across the country. For instance, the \$8,000 first time home buyer tax credit has helped get the housing industry back in shape.